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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION: Sharon's healthSHARON'S
HEALTH

¶1. Summary: Kuwaiti Arabic daily newspapers' coverage of the developments surrounding the Israeli Prime Minister's health mostly focused on the reporting on his conditions and the possibilities of recovery or death. The two analysis pieces found below provide an outlook into the possible scenarios resulting from Sharon's exit from Israeli politics. End Summary.

Selected Headlines

¶21. Saturday, January 07, 2006

-- Al-Qabas p. 38 "Sharon's era has passed in Israel and the region"

-- Al-Qabas p. 38 "Netanyahu and Olmert will try to inherit succede Sharon and the `road map' will not return"

-- Al-Watan p. 39 "Sharon is dying; and Rice postpones her Asia tour; and the peace process moves into the unknown."

-- Al-Watan p. 41 "An American psychic: Sharon was struck by God's anger"

-- Al-Seyassah p. 26 "Sharon's critical condition becomes more direr; and very dangerous damagessevere damage to his hemorrhaging head"

-- Al-Anbaa front page "Sharon's head is still hemorrhaging"

-- Al-Anbaa p. 26 "Who will fill the void left by Israel's king?"; "Bush and Sharon, ideological sympathy"

Block Quotes

¶32. Saturday, January 07, 2006

-- Hisham Melhim wrote on the front page of the moderate daily Al-Qabas under the title "Israel.the absence of an extremist and the one to come is more extreme": "The end of the Sharon era comes after fundamental changes in Israeli politics thate culminated in the ouster of Sharon from the Likud party and establishmenting of the new Kadima Pparty,

the election of Amir Peretz as the leader of the Israeli Labor Party, and the return of Benjamin Netanyahu's control over the Likud. Many observers see that in Sharon's absence the interim period in Israel will not be an easy time. Even if a new coalition government is formed under the leadership of the Kadima Party the freeze on Israeli-Palestinian relations and communications will remain because the new Prime Minister whether it is Netanyahu, Ehud, or Olmert will take a strong stance towards the Palestinians in order to bolster his domestic support and will continue with the policy of unilateral actions especially in light of the current tensions on the Palestinian side that seem like they will not come to and end any time soon."

-- Nabil Al-Fadl wrote for the moderate daily Al-Watan under the title "Jews' heaven or Muslims' hell?": "Sharon's absence from Israeli politics will be a catastrophe for Palestinians and their cause. In situations of dispute such as that of the Israeli-Palestinian situation, it is the men of war who make peace. It was Anwar Al-Sadat would not have taken a single step in the direction of peace with Israel had he not fought the '73 war. . No matter how black and painted in Arab blood Ariel Sharon's history may be, Israelis consider him a hero and none of their extremists can claim to be more of a nationalist than he. . Sadly, the evaluation of Sharon by Arabs and especially the Palestinians does not surpass an emotional superficial judgment as Hamas did when it considered his departure 'better for the world.' Steps will be halted on the road map and the next leader of Israel will be compelled to be cruel and suppressive towards Palestinians in order to win the confidence of the Israeli people and in order to clear himself of the stigma of being easy on the Palestinians. Palestinians will suffer more and more at the hands of the

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new leader no matter who it is before he can open up the peace files and move on the road map. Thereby, the curse will remain upon the Palestinians be it a result of changes in their own leadership or in that of their enemy."

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